

EXHIBIT 103

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Report: Dreamers contribute millions in taxes to N.M.

By Uriel J. Garcia
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Hugo Medina Hernandez, 31, of Santa Fe, an employee at Santa Fe University of Art and Design, works Friday in his office at the university. A recent report by the Institute of Taxation & Economic Policy shows that Dreamers in New Mexico have contributed \$19 million in state and local taxes. Luis Sánchez Saturno/The New Mexican

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For Hugo Medina Hernandez, paying taxes is his American duty — even if he's not a U.S. citizen.

Hernandez, 31, along with his parents, brother and sister, illegally immigrated from Mexico City to Santa Fe 17 years ago. He began working as a shift manager at a pizzeria after graduating from Capital High School. At 19, he started to file his income taxes using an identification number provided by the Internal Revenue Service.

In 2012, he applied and qualified for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, better known as DACA, which is a program that allows young undocumented immigrants to apply for a two-year renewable work permit and a Social Security number.

“Even as a DACA recipient, you still have the same responsibilities

as a U.S. citizen, even if you don't get the same benefits," Hernandez said.

He's one of more than 7,000 DACA recipients in New Mexico who contribute nearly \$19 million in state and local taxes, according to a report released last week by the Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C.

Overall, nearly 900,000 DACA recipients in the country contribute an estimated \$2 billion in state and local taxes, the report says.

The report helps provide balance to the anti-immigrant rhetoric of President Donald Trump, who has moved to step up efforts to deport undocumented immigrants while continuing to push for a wall on the Mexican border. A critic of the report said the question is not whether undocumented immigrants pay taxes, but what benefits they are receiving.

During the presidential campaign, Trump said in a CNN interview that he doubted that undocumented immigrants pay taxes. If any immigrants pay taxes, he said, those immigrants represent a small percentage of the undocumented population.

"It upsets me that Trump uses immigrants or illegal immigrants as a point of argument to say they don't pay taxes because that's not true at all," said Hernandez, who filed his 2016 state and federal taxes in January.

Trump suggested doing away with the DACA program during the campaign. Since becoming president, he has said beneficiaries of the program, known as Dreamers, should "rest easy" but hasn't offered specifics on what he plans to do.

In a Facebook posting that went viral, an Arizona woman in March posted a photo showing her holding a tax document. It read:

"MYTH BUSTER: I, an undocumented immigrant, just filed my taxes and PAID \$300 to the state of Arizona. I cannot receive financial aid from the state or federal government for school, I cannot benefit from unemployment, a reduced healthcare plan, or a retirement fund."

The Facebook posting was made by Belen Sisa, 23, an Argentinian whose parents came to the U.S. when she was 6 years old and overstayed their visas.

Not everyone is convinced that undocumented immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits.

Steven Camarota, research director for the Center for Immigration Studies, a Washington-based group that advocates for lower immigration to the U.S., said the study by the Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy doesn't provide a full picture. He said it's common knowledge that undocumented immigrants pay taxes, either by filing their income taxes or by shopping for goods.

"That's half of the equation," he said. "It doesn't really answer the important question that everybody wants to know, which is, what are they using in services minus what they're paying in taxes."

A study by the National Research Council titled *The New Americans* says that a first-generation immigrant pays about \$1,800 more in taxes than benefits received. The study also says immigrants could receive more in benefits than they pay in taxes if they have less education and if they have children.

The Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy says New Mexico could lose up to \$7.5 million in state and local taxes if DACA were eliminated.

Out of the 876,000 recipients of deferred action nationwide, 7,300 live in New Mexico, according to the latest figures provided by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Hernandez attends the Santa Fe Community College, working toward a bachelor's degree in accounting and business administration. He is employed at the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, collecting tuition and fees for the campus.

He said he began filing his income taxes because he recognizes that he also benefits from basic services the state and federal government provide.

Even if he applies for renewal of his work permit, there's no guarantee he'll get it. But, he said, if at any point in the future Congress creates a pathway to citizenship, he hopes that he has shown he appreciates living in the U.S. by the income taxes he has filed for 12 years.

"I feel American," he said. "I'm used to the American way."

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